

1: Dube
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AW17 Telugu AW17

[For additional information on deities see category 116, pp. 98-108
and 111-115.]

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

non-Aryan groups was taking place in Indian society and Hinduism was consolidating itself. The highly organized craftsmen's guilds of those days may perhaps have succeeded in maintaining their integrity and exclusiveness for a long time, but had ultimately to yield; yet the tension created by their resistance remained, and even when they were absorbed into the fold of Hindu society they were not admitted as equals to the groups of comparable social status and in consequence probably continued to maintain their age-long exclusiveness.

All the castes whose relative positions in the caste-hierarchy have been shown in the accompanying table are endogamous. There is a permanent social distance between them; the individual is born into a caste, and a subsequent change in status is, except to the very lowest strata of society, equally impossible upwards or downwards.¹ In general it may be said that people accept food at the hands of all castes occupying a higher level in this hierarchy, the only exception being that of the Vaddar, who do not accept food from the highly placed Sakali and Margali. Without exception people on a higher level refuse food from those on a lower level. Each caste has a traditional occupation sanctioned by religion, and these monopolies should not be infringed upon, except in the case of agriculture, which all may pursue.

Mention should here be made of the Jangam and the Katike castes, of each of which there is one family in Shamirpet. The Jangam are a semi-priestly caste ritually attached to the Baljas, for whom they tie the 'lingam'—a phallic symbol representing Shiva—and function as priests on the occasion of weddings. On the days of *Pitra Moksha Amavasya*² and *Shivaratri*,³ they visit Hindu houses, particularly of those peasants who follow the Shaivite⁴

¹ When a person is excommunicated or out-casted he is not down-graded and pushed into a lower caste; he is merely denied the privileges of equal participation in the socio-religious life of the community.

² The night of the New Moon in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada (August-September).

³ The day on which Shiva is believed to have drunk the world's poison, retaining it in his throat, and thereby saving mankind from possible harm from this poison.

⁴ Of the great gods of the Hindu 'trinity' Brahma is not worshipped because of his sinful infatuation for his own daughter, whilst Vishnu and Shiva are worshipped. Those who principally worship the former, usually in his incarnations as Rama and Krishna, are known as Vaishnava; those worshipping the latter as Shaiva or Shaivite. Cf. Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London, 1950), pp. 56-59, 296-300, 360-362.

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bath or wash is necessary to remove the impurity caused by the act. Non-observance of these rules will have a polluting effect; and according to the nature and degree of pollution purificatory rites will have to be undertaken. 783

Belief in ghosts and spirits is universal. They are feared and propitiated. Strange mystical power pervading certain objects is recognized, and fetishes and amulets are eagerly sought. Witchcraft is often suspected, and three or four people in the community are believed to possess magical powers. 771
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Clearly, Hinduism as it is practised in the village is not the Hinduism of the classical philosophical systems of India, for it possesses neither the metaphysical heights nor the abstract content of the latter. It is a religion of fasts, feasts and festivals, in which prescribed rituals cover all the major crises of life. Worship and propitiation of gods and spirits follow the annual round of festivals and the ritual of the human life-cycle. Disease and difficulty may also necessitate invoking assistance from these sources.

In early childhood religious instruction through legendary tales and anecdotes exercises its influence on the developing mind of the child in whose thoughts and world of fancy these ideas linger on. Youth brings in its wake a more worldly and materialistic outlook towards life and its pleasures. Thoughts are turned to religion when the evening of life approaches, partly to postpone the final moment of departure as long as it could be, and partly to ensure the future lying beyond the point of death. Analysis of life-histories reveals that spiritualism cannot be said to be the keynote in the life of the community; far from it the religion appears to be a practical one. It strengthens and fortifies the individual and the group in situations where technical competence and practical intelligence are of no avail, and at the same time acts as a bond of cohesion for maintaining the structural unity of the society. 869
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2. BELIEF: GODS AND DEITIES

The Muslims believe in one God, and follow the way of life laid down for them by their Prophet. They all belong to the Sunni division, and as such differ from the Shias and other splinter divisions of Islam in respect of the interpretation of their holy book as well as in several details of belief, ritual and ceremonial. Almost all the Muslims of Shamirpet have been converted to Islam from [777]
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795 Hinduism in the course of the last four or five-generations. They
 • 776 do not believe in any of the gods of the Hindu Trinity, nor in any
 of the later incarnations; but they share with the Hindus a living
 faith in the existence of malevolent ghosts, spirits and witches.
 [621] They participate with the rest of the community in village cere-
 monies and sacrifices. To ward off cholera, plague and smallpox,
 they too think that it is necessary to propitiate the local deities
 and goddesses.

779 Village Hinduism is not easy to describe. It is an extremely
 184 elastic religion, and within its all-India framework admits of a
 614 considerable degree of regional and local variation. In his *Religion
 and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, M. N. Srinivas has
 introduced the useful concept of 'spread', and split up village
 Hinduism into 'All India Hinduism', 'Peninsular Hinduism',
 'Regional Hinduism', and 'Local Hinduism'.

776 The people of Shamirpet worship all the major gods of the
 171 Hindu pantheon, but many of their cults distinctly belong to the
 complex of ritual that can be regarded as peculiar to peninsular
 India. Some of these observances present variations which are
 confined only to this particular village.

The Hindu concept of a Trinity, comprising three manifesta-
 tions of divinity—Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the sustainer; and
 Shiva, the destroyer—has an all-India spread, and in common
 with the Hindus of the other parts of India the residents of
 Shamirpet principally worship either Shiva, or Vishnu and his
 771 numerous incarnations—particularly Rama and Krishna. The
 171 concepts of soul (*atma*), of the reckoning of an individual's actions
 and their consequences on his present and future life (the concept
 of *karma*), of laying emphasis on the right ordering of life and on
 doing what is just and moral (concept of *dharma*), of heaven and
 hell, and finally of the transmigration of the soul and its re-birth
 also have such an all-India spread; although there are significant
 regional and local variations in their details. Finally, the nature
 of rituals connected with the human life-cycle has been very con-
 siderably influenced by the Sanskritic ritual of all-India Hinduism,
 but it still continues to be characterized by some distinctive
 regional peculiarities.

778 All over India some rivers are regarded as sacred, and legends
 and cults grow around them. The Godavari is among the rivers
 whose sanctity and importance have been enhanced by prominent

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mention in Hindu scriptures. Being the most important river of 778 the Deccan region its significance is very great to the Hindus of this area.

Along with the great gods of all-India Hinduism the people 776 also continue to observe cults associated with regional and local 171 deities and goddesses. The nature and characteristics of these goddesses differ widely in the different culture-areas of the land. Some of the goddesses listed below are commonly found in the Telugu-speaking areas, particularly in the Telangana districts of Hyderabad. Their main characteristics according to the residents of Shamirpet have also been mentioned.

They are:

1. Pochamma—goddess of smallpox.
2. Mutyalamma—goddess of chickenpox.
3. Balamma—goddess of fertility whose wrath causes sterility in women.
4. Mahakalamma—goddess of cholera.
5. Durgamma—goddess presiding over the destinies and welfare of the village.
6. Maisamma—goddess protecting the village boundaries.

Besides the above, certain other goddesses are also worshipped. Important among them are Ellamma (for the cure of boils), Pinamma (when naming a child after one of his deceased grandparents), and minor goddesses of the fields who protect the crops. To these must be added several other named and unnamed deities and goddesses whose worship is confined only to the village of Shamirpet.

All the characteristics of Hinduism having an all-India spread, 778 described above, are in evidence in the religion of the people of 346 Shamirpet. There is a small Shiva temple near the house of the Brahmin; another with several images on a hillock by the side of 782 the Deshmukh's house. There are two platforms in the village on [776] which the monkey-god Hanuman¹ is lodged. In many clean caste houses there are images or pictures of some of these gods. Those

¹ Hanuman, the 'Son of the Winds', was one of the monkey helpers of Rama in his search for Sita when she was abducted by the demon Ravana (according to the epic poem *Ramayana*). Modern tradition seeks to interpret the Monkeys and Beasts of this story as the aboriginal inhabitants of the Deccan at the turn of the Christian era.

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is worshipped. Incense is burnt by putting *ghee* (clarified butter) on a fire in front of Vishnu's image. Two red threads are tied by the Brahmin, first to the arms of the image, and a little later, after being removed therefrom, to his own arm.

Petramasa. The last day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada is dedicated to ceremonies in honour of the ancestors and the deceased members of the household. In fact the whole fortnight preceding this day is occupied by this activity, for water must be offered to the dead on the *tithi* (the lunar day corresponding to that of their death). Among the higher castes, if the family can afford it, the Brahmin is invited to officiate at these rites. Those who cannot afford it, and people of the lower castes, manage it themselves. On the Petramasa day itself cooked rice, curds and several other preparations are offered to the deceased members of the lineage. Gifts of money, grain and vegetables are made to the Brahmin and the Jangam.

If there was a death in the family in the preceding year, during the Petramasa fortnight on the lunar day of death, an elaborate rite is performed to call home the spirit of the deceased and lodge it with other ancestor-spirits in one corner of the house. For these rites different branches of a family gather together under one main roof.

The Malas and Madigas as well as Vaddars and Erkalas do not have an elaborate observance. However, the first two make small gifts of money to the Jangam in honour of their dead, if the Jangam visits their houses.

Dasara. This festival is observed in the village both individually and collectively. All Hindus bath early in the morning. The Brahmin and the Komti worship a bunch of *shami* (*Prosopis spicigera*) leaves along with the images of gods; others worship only the deities. Observed on the tenth day of Ashvina, Dasara is regarded as a non-vegetarian festival. With the exception of Brahmins and Komtis, who are vegetarians, the other non-vegetarian castes make it a point to cook some meat dish on this day. At midday people worship the gods in their houses.

In the afternoon the Brahmin visits the Deshmukh's house, and worships a bunch of *shami* leaves and the headman's ancestral weapons. In the meantime a flag is hoisted on the central flag post near the police station. Madigas beat their drums and people start collecting. When all the responsible village elders assemble

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583 regarded as breaches of the established rules of society and treated accordingly.

585 It is difficult to summarize the rites and observances involved in a Hindu marriage, for they differ greatly from caste to caste, and from family to family. Here only a very general outline can be given.

The wedding takes place in the bride's house, on an auspicious day fixed by the two parties on the advice of the Brahmin priest. The bridegroom's party, consisting of relations and friends, leave their village in good time to arrive in the bride's village at least a day before the actual date of the marriage. On arrival they are received with great ceremony by the bride's people, and are lodged in a house kept vacant and clean for their use. In the courtesies that are exchanged it is necessary to make some special effort to keep the bridegroom's mother and sisters pleased for any dissatisfaction to them is likely to lead to trouble which may hold up further rites. While the bridegroom's party try to settle down in their house, the bride's people finalize the arrangements for the first dinner. When everything is ready word is sent to the bridegroom's party. After the dinner nothing remains to be done on that day. The guests return to their temporary abode; the hosts get busy to make everything ready for the rites of the next day.

[515] When the next day arrives, the bride's mother and other female relations carry water and towels to the groom's mother and other guests so that 'they may wash their mouths'. A little later breakfast is sent to them. The first major rite for the day is the worship of the bride's *kula-devata* or family god. In this both the bride and the bridegroom participate. The second major rite is known as *lagnam*, which must be performed at an auspicious hour determined by the Brahmin on the basis of his astrological calculations. The bride's party go in a procession to bring the guests to the marriage shed. At the appointed hour the *lagnam* is performed by chanting religious verses. The bridegroom ties a necklace of black beads round the bride's neck. This necklace symbolizes her married status, and she should not be without it unless she is widowed. He also puts rings on the second toes of her feet. Before the tying of *mangalsutra* (black beads) the two have to promise to stand by each other through all phases of life, for the mutual satisfaction of bodily, economic and spiritual needs. But the marriage is not yet complete. To put the seal of religious authority on it, the important

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CHAPTER IV

MODES OF WORSHIP IN THE TELUGU
COUNTRY

755 LET us suppose that an attack of cholera or small-pox has broken out in a village of South India. We will take a village in the Telugu country, in one of the more backward districts, where life is lived under more primitive conditions than in places where large towns and railways and the influence of the Brāhmans have tended to change old-fashioned ideas and customs.

- 776 *A Telugu Village.* The village deity, in this particular village, is called Peddamma, the great mother. The epidemic is a sign that she is angry and 755 requires to be propitiated. So a collection is made for 782 the expenses of a festival, or a rich man offers to pay all expenses, and a propitious day is selected, which in this village may be any day except Sunday or Thursday. Then the potter of the village is instructed to make a clay image of the great mother, and the carpenter to make a small wooden cart, and a buffalo is chosen as the chief victim for the sacrifice.

When the appointed day arrives, the buffalo is sprinkled all over with yellow *turmeric*,¹ while garlands of margosa leaves are hung round its neck and tied to its horns. At about two p.m. it is conducted round the village in procession to the sound of music and the beating of tom-toms. The two sections of the Outcastes, the Mālās and the Mādīgās, take the leading

¹ *Curcuma longa* is an Indian plant from the rootstock of which a powder called turmeric is extracted. This powder is used as a dye and also as one of the ingredients of curry-powder.

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part in the sacrifice, and conduct the buffalo from house to house. One Mādigā goes on ahead, with a tom-tom, to announce that "the buffalo devoted to the goddess is coming." The people then come out from their houses, bow down to worship the buffalo, and pour water over his feet, and also give some food to the Mālās and Mādigās, who form the procession. By about eight p.m. this ceremony is finished, and the buffalo is brought to an open spot in the village and tied up near a small canopy of cloths supported on bamboo poles, which has been set up for the reception of the goddess. All the villagers then assemble at the same place, and at about ten p.m. they go in procession, with music and tom-toms and torches, to the house of the potter, where the clay image is ready prepared. On arriving at his house, they pour about two and a half measures of rice on the ground and put the image on the top of it, adorned with a new cloth and jewels. All who are present then worship the image, and a ram is killed, its head being cut off with a large chopper, and the blood sprinkled on the top of the image, as a kind of consecration. The potter then takes up the idol and carries it out of the house for a little distance, and gives it to a washerman, who carries it to the place where the canopy has been set up to receive it. During the procession the people flourish sticks and swords and spears to keep off the evil spirits, and, for the same purpose, cut limes in half and throw them up in the air. The idea is that the greedy demons will clutch at the golden limes and carry them off, and so be diverted from any attack on the man who carries the image. When the idol has been duly deposited under the canopy, another procession is made to the house of the toddy-drawer. He is the man who climbs the palm trees and draws off the juice which is made into toddy. At his house some rice is cooked, and a pot of toddy and a bottle of *arrack*¹ are produced and duly smeared with yellow turmeric and a red paste, constantly used in religious

¹ Arrack is a native intoxicant.

755 worship among the Hindus and called *kunkuma*.¹ The
 ● 776 cooked rice is put in front of the pot of toddy and bottle
 782 of arrack, a ram is killed in sacrifice, and then the
 [465] toddy-drawer worships the pot and the bottle. The
 village officials pay him his fee, three-eighths of a measure
 of rice, three-eighths of a measure of *cholan*² and four
 annas, and then he carries the pot and bottle in proces-
 sion, and places them under the canopy near the image of
 Peddamma. Then comes yet another procession. The
 people go off to the house of the chief official, the
 Reddy, and bring from it some cooked rice in a large
 earthenware pot, some sweet cakes, and a lamb. A
 large quantity of margosa leaves are spread on the
 ground in front of the image, the rice from the Reddy's
 house is placed upon them in a heap, and a large heap
 of rice, from one hundred to three hundred measures,
 according to the amount of the subscriptions, is poured
 in a heap a little farther away.

All these elaborate proceedings form only the
 preparations for the great sacrifice, which is now
 about to begin. The lamb is first worshipped and
 then sacrificed by having its throat cut and its head
 cut off. A ram is next brought and stood over the first
 large heap of rice, and is there cut in two, through the
 back, with a heavy chopper, by one of the village
 washermen. The blood pours out over the rice and
 soaks it through. One half of the ram is then taken up
 and carried to a spot a few yards off, where a body of
 Asādis are standing ready to begin their part in the
 ceremonies. The other half of the ram is left lying
 on the rice. The Asādis then begin to sing a long chant
 in honour of the deity. Meanwhile, the chief sacrifice
 is made. The buffalo is brought forward, and the
 Mādigās kill it by cutting its throat (in some villages its
 head is cut off). Some water is first poured over the
 blood, and then the pool of blood and water is covered
 up carefully with earth, lest any outsider from another

¹ Made of turmeric mixed with lime.

² A coarse grain, the staple food of the villagers.

4 [i.e., the toddy-drawer--Analyst]

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755 village should come and steal it. The idea is that if
• 776 any man from another village should take away and
782 carry home even a small part of the blood, that village
would get the benefit of the sacrifice. The head of the
buffalo is then cut off and placed before the image, with
a layer of fat from its entrails smeared over the fore-
head and face, so as to cover entirely the eyes and nose.
The right foreleg is cut off and placed crosswise in the
mouth, some boiled rice is placed upon the fat on the
forehead, and on it an earthenware lamp, which is kept
alight during the whole of the festival. Why the right
foreleg should be cut off and placed in the mouth, and
what the meaning of it is, I have never been able to
discover nor can I conjecture. When I have asked the
villagers, they only reply, "It is the custom." But I
have found the custom prevailing in all parts of South
India, among Tamils, Telugus, and Canarese alike, and I
have been informed that exactly the same custom pre-
vails in the Southern Marāthā country. It seems to be
a very ancient part of the ritual of sacrifice prevailing
in South India.¹ This completes the presentation of
the sacrifice to the goddess, who is supposed to delight
in the food offered, and especially in the blood. A great
deal of the food offered is, as a matter of fact, taken

[695] ¹ Maharaja Sir V. S. Ratga Rao Bahadur, G.C.I.E., C.B.E.,
writes in *The Asiatic Review* for January, 1919: "The Lord
Bishop wishes to know why the leg of an animal is put crosswise
in its mouth after it has been sacrificed before the village god-
dess. Among the menial castes of a village there is the practice
of a guilty man putting a piece of dry grass crosswise in his
mouth when he goes to the head of his village to ask his pardon.
It denotes that he has committed a wrong act, as a beast. In
places where grass is not available, the person in question puts
the first finger of his right hand crosswise in his mouth with the
same idea or purpose. Here the animals are sacrificed before the
village gods and goddesses by the people in the expectation, or
rather with the firm belief, that their sins will be forgiven by
those deities, and that their consequences will be thus averted by
means of those sacrifices. Instead of putting their fingers in
their mouths, as stated before, they put the animal's leg
(generally the right leg) crosswise in its mouth. Though I am
not sure that this is the explanation of this practice, I presume
that it must be along these lines, as no other ground is traceable."

755 away by the people and eaten in their homes, but the
● 776 idea is that the goddess takes the essence and leaves
782 the worshippers the material substance. This takes till
about three a.m. next morning ; and then begins another
important part of the ceremonies.

[786] Some of the rice from the heap, over which the ram
was sacrificed and its blood poured out, is taken and put
in a flat basket, and some of the entrails of the buffalo
are mixed with it. The intestines of the lamb, which
was first killed, are put over the neck of a Mālā, and its
liver is placed in his mouth,¹ while another Mālā takes
the basket of rice soaked in blood and mixed with the
entrails of the buffalo. A procession is then formed
with these two weird figures in the middle. The man
with the liver in his mouth is worked up into a state of
frantic excitement and is supposed to be inspired by the
goddess. He has to be held by men on either side of
him, or kept fast with ropes, to prevent his rushing
away ; and all round him are the *ryots*, i.e. the small
farmers, and the Mālās, flourishing clubs and swords,
and throwing limes into the air, to drive away the evil
spirits. As the procession moves through the village,
the people shout out " Food ! Food ! " and the man who
carries the basket sprinkles the rice soaked in blood over
the houses to protect them from evil spirits. As he
walks along, he shouts out, at intervals, that he sees the
evil spirits, and falls down in a faint. Then lambs have
to be sacrificed on the spot and limes thrown into the
air and cocoanuts broken, to drive away the demons and
bring the man to his senses. And so the procession
moves through the village, amid frantic excitement,
till, as the day dawns, they return to the canopy, where
the great mother is peacefully reposing.

At about ten a.m. a fresh round of ceremonies
begins. Some meat is cut from the carcass of the
buffalo and cooked with some cholam, and then given to
five little Mālā boys, *siddhalu*, the innocents, as they are
called. They are all covered over with a large cloth,

¹ Cf. pp. 109, 148 below

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and eat the food entirely concealed from view, probably to prevent the evil spirits from seeing them, or the evil eye from striking them. And then some more food is served to the Asādis, who have been for many hours, during the ceremonies of the night, chanting the praises of the goddess. After this the villagers bring their offerings. The Brāhmans, who may not kill animals, bring rice and cocoanuts, and other castes bring lambs, goats, sheep, fowls, and buffaloes, which are all killed by the washermen, by cutting their throats, except the buffaloes, which are always killed by the Mādigās, the lowest class of Outcastes. The heads are all cut off and presented to the goddess. This lasts till about three p.m., when the people go off to the house of the village carpenter, who has got ready a small wooden cart. On their arrival some cooked rice is offered to the cart, and a lamb sacrificed before it, and a new cloth and eight annas are given to the carpenter as his fee. The cart is then dragged by the washermen, to the sound of horns and tom-toms, to the place of sacrifice. The heads and carcasses of the animals already sacrificed are first removed by the Mālās and Mādigās, except the head of the buffalo first offered, which remains in its place till all the ceremonies are finished, when the shrine is removed.

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At about seven p.m. another series of ceremonies begins. First a lamb is sacrificed before the goddess, and its blood mixed with some cooked rice, and at the same time a pig is buried up to the neck in a pit at the entrance of the village, with its head projecting above the earth. The villagers go in procession to the spot, while one of the Mādigās carries the rice, soaked in the blood of the lamb, in a basket. All the cattle of the village are then brought to the place and driven over the head of the unhappy pig,¹ which is, of course, trampled to death; and, as they pass over the pig, the blood and rice are sprinkled upon them to preserve them from disease. Then, after this, follows the final ceremony.

¹ Cf. p 58 below.

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782 The image of the goddess is taken from the canopy by the washerman, and a Mādigā takes the head of the buffalo with its foreleg in the mouth, the forehead and nostrils all smeared over with fat, and the earthen lamp still lighted on the top. They then all go in procession to the boundary of the village, first the men carrying the buffalo's head, next the washerman with the image, and last the small wooden cart. When the procession arrives at the extreme limit of the village lands, they go on, for about a furlong, into the lands of the neighbouring village. There the Asādis first chant the praises of the goddess, then some turmeric is distributed to all the people, and finally the image is divested of all its ornaments and solemnly placed upon the ground and left there. The light on the head of the buffalo is extinguished, and the head itself carried off by the Mādigā, who takes it for a feast to his own house. The object of transporting the goddess to the lands of the next village is to transfer to that village the wrath of the deity, a precaution which does not show much faith in the temper of the goddess, nor much charity towards their neighbours!

[533] *Gudivada, near Masulipatam.* A somewhat different form of ceremonial prevails in some of the villages of the Telugu country nearer the coast. The village of Gudivada, about twenty miles from the important town of Masulipatam, may be taken as a good specimen of a well-to-do village in a prosperous district, and the ceremonies prevailing there are a fair sample of the cult of the village deities in these parts.

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[532] The name of the village deity at Gudivada is Pallamma. Her image is the figure of a woman with four arms, and a leopard's head under her right foot, carved in bas-relief on a flat stone about three feet high, standing in an open compound, surrounded by a low stone wall. The pūjārī, who is a Śūdra, gave me a full account of the rites and ceremonies. Weekly offerings are made every Sunday, when the pūjārī washes the image with water and soap-nut seeds early in the morning, and smears it with turmeric

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and kunkuma, offers incense, breaks a cocoanut, and cooks and presents to the image about a seer of rice, which he afterwards eats himself. The rice is provided daily by the villagers. Occasionally fowls and sheep are offered on the Sunday by villagers who have made vows in time of sickness or other misfortunes. When a sheep is sacrificed, it is first purified by washing. The animal is simply killed in front of the image by a Mādigā, who cuts off its head with a large chopper. The blood is allowed to flow on the ground and nothing special is done with it. The head becomes the perquisite of the pūjārī, and the offerer takes away the carcass for a feast in his house. In many villages, both in the Telugu and Tamil districts, water is poured over the sheep's back to see whether it shivers. If it shivers, it is a sign that the goddess has accepted it.¹ Where the people are economical, they keep on pouring water till it does shiver, to avoid the expense of providing a second victim, but, where they are more scrupulous, if it does not shiver, it is taken as a sign that the goddess will not accept it and it is taken away. 755 776 782 (782)

A public festival is held whenever an epidemic breaks out. The headman of the village then gets a new earthenware pot, besmears it with turmeric and kunkuma and puts inside some clay bracelets, some necklaces, and ear-rings, three pieces of charcoal, three pieces of turmeric, three pieces of incense, a piece of dried cocoanut, a woman's cloth, and two annas' worth of coppers—a strange collection of miscellaneous charms and offerings. The pot is then hung up in a tree near the image, as a pledge that, if the epidemic disappears, the people will celebrate a festival.

When it does disappear, a thatched shed of palmyra leaves is built near the image, and a special image of clay, adorned with turmeric and kunkuma, is put inside, and beneath it an earthen pot filled with buttermilk and boiled rice. This pot is also smeared with turmeric and 755 776 782 823

¹ For this widespread superstition see Sir Alfred Lyall, [13] *Asiatic Studies*, I, 19. Cf. pp. 63, 68, 69, 73, 99, below.

kunkuma, adorned with margosa leaves, covered with an earthenware saucer, and carried in procession through the village during the day, to the exhilarating sound of pipes, horns, and tom-toms, by the village potter, who takes the rice and buttermilk for his perquisite and renews it every morning of the festival at the public expense. The duration of the festival depends on the amount of the subscriptions, but it always lasts for an odd number of days, excluding all numbers with a seven in them, e.g. 7, 17, 27, etc. During the night the barbers of the village chant the praises of the goddess, and the Mādigās beat tom-toms near the image.

On the night before the day appointed for the offering of animal sacrifices by the villagers, a male buffalo, called Devara Potu, i.e. devoted to the deity, is sacrificed on behalf of the whole village. First, the buffalo is washed with water, smeared with yellow turmeric and red kunkuma, and then garlanded with flowers and the leaves of the sacred margosa tree. It is brought before the image; and a Mādigā cuts off its head, if possible at one blow, over a heap of boiled rice, which becomes soaked with the blood. The right foreleg is then cut off and placed crosswise in its mouth, according to the widespread custom prevailing in South India, the fat of the entrails is smeared over the eyes and forehead, and the head is placed in front of the image. A lighted lamp is placed, not as in the other villages on the head itself, but on the heap of rice soaked with blood. This rice is then put into a basket; and a Mādigā, the village *vetty* or sweeper, carries it round the site of the village, sprinkling it on the ground as he goes. The whole village goes with him, but there is no music or tom-toms. The people shout out as they go "Poli! Poli!" i.e. "Food! Food!" and clap their hands and wave their sticks above their heads to keep off the evil spirits. The rice offered to the goddess, but not soaked with blood, is then distributed to the people. What spirits the rice soaked in blood is supposed to feed is not clear, but the object of sprinkling the blood is evidently to ward off evil spirits

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and prevent them from coming near the village, and apparently the present idea is that they will be satiated with rice and blood and not want to do any mischief. The original idea was possibly quite different; but this seems to be the intention of the ceremony in modern times.

On the next day, early in the morning, the clay image and the pot are washed and smeared afresh with turmeric and kunkuma. Incense and boiled rice are then offered as on other days, and the pot is taken in procession round the village. When this has been done, about midday, each householder brings his offering of boiled rice, cakes, fruits and flowers, and, in addition, the village as a whole contributes about two hundred or more seers of rice, which is boiled near the pandal. All these offerings are placed in a heap before the image. Then, first, a sheep or a buffalo is offered on behalf of the whole village. Having been duly washed, and smeared with turmeric and kunkuma, and decorated with margosa leaves, its head is cut off by a Mādigā. The blood is allowed to flow on the ground, and some loose earth is thrown upon it to cover it up. The head is offered to the image by the headman of the village. After this various householders, even Brāhmanas and Bunniahs, bring animals for sacrifice. All are killed by a Mādigā, and then the heads are all presented and placed in a heap before the goddess. Sometimes an extraordinary number of animals is sacrificed on occasions of this kind, as many as a thousand sheep on a single day. In a village like Gudivada the number of victims is, of course, far less. The question of precedence in the offering of victims constantly gives rise to quarrels among the leading villagers. When I was once visiting Gudivada, there was a case pending before the *tahsildar*, i.e. the sub-divisional magistrate, between a *zamindar*, landowner, and a village *munsiff*, i.e. a village magistrate, about this knotty point. The heads are taken away by the *pūjārīs*, potters, washermen, barbers, Mālās and Mādigās, and others who take any official part in the sacrifice. The carcasses of the

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755 private sacrifices are taken away by the offerers, and
 • 776 that of the public victim belongs to the headman of the
 782 village. The rice, fruit, etc., are distributed among the
 various officials. The function lasts from about ten a.m.
 to five p.m.

In the evening, a cart is brought to the image with
 nine pointed stakes standing upright in it, two at each
 of the four corners and one in the centre: on each stake
 a young pig, a lamb, or a fowl is impaled alive. A
 Mālā, called a *Pambala*, i.e. hereditary priest, then sits
 in the cart dressed in female attire, holding in his hand
 the clay image of the goddess which was made for the
 festival. The cart is dragged with ropes to the extreme
 boundary of the village lands, and both cart and ropes
 are left beyond the boundary. The Pambalas take away
 the animals, which all die during the procession, as
 their share of the offerings.

796 *Living animals impaled in many villages.* This
 776 cruel ceremony of impaling live animals is quite
 782 common in the eastern part of the Telugu country,¹
 785 and I have come across it in many villages that I
 have visited. The Rev. F. N. Alexander, the veteran
 C.M.S. missionary, who lived over fifty years at
 Ellore, told me that he witnessed it in the town
 of Ellore the first year that he went there, and wrote
 a letter to the *Madras Mail* describing it. As a result
 of his letter, the practice was forbidden by the
 Government. So now at Ellore the animals are tied on
 to the stakes without being impaled; but in many
 villages near Ellore the custom still survives of impaling
 the unfortunate animals alive. Sometimes there are
 only four stakes on the cart, sometimes five, and some-
 times more. It is not often that there are as many as
 nine. In one of the villages of the Kurnool district, I
 found that a similar barbarity was practised in connexion
 with the hook-swinging ceremony. On the fifth day of
 the festival in honour of Aṅkamma, a large car is
 constructed, with an arrangement of poles projecting

¹ Cf. pp. 59, 65, 69.

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about 20 feet in the air. A sheep is then suspended from the pole by iron hooks fastened through the muscles of its back and a band round its middle, and swung round and round. Two or three of the older men in the village said that they had often seen men swing like this with iron hooks fastened into their backs,¹ and that it did not hurt. As soon as the sheep is swung up, buffaloes, sheep and goats are sacrificed, and the car is then dragged in procession through the village.

A cruel pig sacrifice. Sometimes, when there is cattle disease, a pig is buried up to its neck at the boundary of the village, a heap of boiled rice is deposited near the spot, and then all the cattle of the village are driven over the unhappy pig.² It is not the custom at Gudivada to sprinkle anything on the cattle as they pass over the poor animal, as is done elsewhere.

There is a remarkable parallel to this form of sacrifice in a description quoted by Mr. E. Thurston, in his *Ethnographical Notes in Southern India*,³ of an ancient custom among the Lambadis, a wandering tribe of South India :

"In former times, the Lambadis, before setting out on a journey, used to procure a little child and bury it in the ground up to its shoulders, and then drive their loaded bullocks over the unfortunate victim. In proportion to the bullocks thoroughly trampling the child to death, so their belief in a successful journey increased."

It is possible that this custom of driving the cattle over the head of a buried pig may be connected with the worship of an agricultural goddess, since in ancient Greece the pig was sacred to agricultural deities, e.g. Aphrodite, Adonis, and Demeter ; but it may also be a survival of some former custom of infanticide or human sacrifice such as prevailed among the Lambadis.

An old man in the Kurnool district once described to me the account that he had received from his fore-

¹ This is the practice in the Hindu *dola-jātra*, swing-festival, celebrated in honour of Durgā, the wife of Śiva. Cf pp. 61, 76, 82, 83.

² See p. 53, 60.

³ P. 507.

- 796 fathers of the ceremonies observed when founding
● 776 a new village. An auspicious site is selected and an
782 auspicious day, and then in the centre of the site is dug
a large hole, in which are placed different kinds of
grain, small pieces of the five metals, gold, silver,
copper, iron, and lead, and a large stone, called *boddu-
rayee*, i.e. navel-stone, standing about three and a half
feet above the ground, very like the ordinary boundary
stones seen in the fields. And then, at the entrance
of the village, in the centre of the main street, where
most of the cattle pass in and out on their way to and
from the fields, they dig another hole and bury a pig
alive. This ceremony would be quite consistent with
either of the explanations suggested as to the origin
of pig-burying. The pig may be buried at the
entrance to the village as the emblem of fertility and
strength, to secure the prosperity of the agricultural
community, the fertility of the fields, and the health
and fecundity of the cattle. Or it may equally be
a substitute for an original human sacrifice. The
idea that a new building or institution must be inaugu-
rated by the sacrifice of a human life is very common
all over India. To this day there is often a panic
among the villagers who live near the banks of a
river where a bridge is about to be built, because
they think that one or more of their babies are sure
to be required to bury under the foundations of the
first pier. On one of my visits to Kalasapad, in the
Cuddapah district, the missionary told me that, when
a new ward was opened for their local mission dis-
pensary, no one would go into it, because the people
imagined that the first to go in would be the needful
sacrifice. Their fears were allayed by a religious
service at the opening of the ward ; but had it been a
Hindu hospital, probably a goat or a sheep would have
782 been killed as a substitute for the human victim.
796 The idea of substitution, too, is quite common in
785 India. In the hook-swinging ceremony described above,¹

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it is common both in the Telugu and Tamil districts to substitute a sheep for a man, and to fasten the iron hooks in the muscles of its back.

Alleged infanticide among Todas. I have been told that, among the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills, it was formerly the custom to place female children, whom it was not desired to rear, on the ground at the entrance of the mund, i.e. a group of huts, and drive buffaloes over them. If they survived this ordeal, they were allowed to live.

It is only fair to add that the Todas themselves deny that this custom ever existed. To quote Mr. Thurston again:¹

"The practice of infanticide, as it prevailed among the Todas of the Nilgiris, is best summed up in the words of an aged Toda during an interview with Colonel Marshall (*A Phrenologist amongst the Todas*, 1873): 'I was a little boy when Mr. Sullivan (the first English pioneer of the Nilgiris) visited these mountains. In those days it was the custom to kill children, but the practice has long died out, and now one never hears of it. I don't know whether it was wrong or not to kill them, but we were very poor, and could not support our children. Now every one has a mantle (*putkūli*), but formerly there was only one for the whole family. We did not kill them to please any god, but because it was our custom. The mother never nursed the child, and the parents did not kill it. Do you think we could kill it ourselves? Those tell lies who say we laid it before the open buffalo-pen so that it might be run over and killed by the animals. We never did such things, and it is all nonsense that we drowned it in buffalo's milk. Boys were never killed—only girls; not those who were sickly and deformed—that would be a sin; but, when we had one girl, or in some families two girls, those that followed were killed. An old woman (*kelachi*) used to take the child immediately it was born, and close its nostrils, ears and mouth with a cloth thus (here pantomimic action). It would shortly droop its head, and go to sleep. We then buried it in the ground. The *kelachi* got a present of four annas (4d.) for the deed.' The old man's remark about the cattle-pen refers to the Malagasy custom of placing a new-born child at the entrance of a cattle-pen, and then driving the cattle over it, to see whether they would trample on it or not."

Masulipatam. At Masulipatam, where ceremonies are performed very similar to those at Gudivada

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 507.

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755 during an epidemic, a washerman carries the earthen-
• 776 ware pot, half full of buttermilk and adorned with
782 margosa leaves, round the village to the sound of tom-
toms. As it goes round, the washerman stops at each
house and the wife comes out and pours water beside
the pot on the ground and does reverence to the pot,
imploping the goddess not to let any evil spirit come to
the house; and then she puts more rice and buttermilk
into it. When it is full, it is taken back to the shrine
and another brought in its place. As this procession
continues for fifteen days, the accumulation of rice and
buttermilk must be considerable. It is ultimately
consumed by the washermen, potters, Mālās and
Mādigās, who take part in the festival. The real
sacrifice begins on the sixteenth day and lasts for a
month. Cotton-thread and all the rice and buttermilk
collected from the villagers are offered to the image.
The images themselves are smeared with turmeric, and
dots of *kunkuma* are put on them, and finally on the last
day a male buffalo, called *Devara-Potu*, i.e. devoted to
the goddess, is brought before the image and its head
cut off by the head Mādigā of the town. The blood is
caught in a vessel and sprinkled over some boiled rice,
and then the head, with the right foreleg in the mouth,
is placed before the shrine on a flat wicker basket, with
the rice and blood on another basket just below it. A
lighted lamp is placed on the head, and then another
Mādigā carries it on his own head round the village,
with a new cloth dipped in the blood of the victim tied
round his neck. This is regarded here and elsewhere
as a very inauspicious and dangerous office; and the
headman of the village has to offer considerable
inducements to persuade a Mādigā to undertake it.
Ropes are tied round his body and arms and held
fast by men walking behind him, as he goes round,
to prevent his being carried off by evil spirits, and
limes are cut in half and thrown into the air, so that
the demons may catch at them instead of at the man.
It is believed that gigantic demons sit on the tops of tall
trees ready to swoop down and carry him away, in

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order to get the rice and the buffalo's head. The idea of carrying the head and rice round a village, so the people said, is to draw a kind of cordon on every side of it and prevent the entrance of the evil spirits. Should any one in the town refuse to subscribe for the festival, his house is omitted from the procession, and left to the tender mercies of the devils. This procession is called *bali haranam*; ¹ and in this district *inams*, rent-free lands, are held from Government by certain families of Mādigās for performing it. Besides the buffalo, large numbers of sheep and goats and fowls are sacrificed, each householder giving at least one animal. The head Mādigā who kills the animals takes the carcass and distributes the flesh among the members of his family. Often cases come into the courts to decide who has the right to kill them. As the sacrifice cannot wait for the tedious processes of the law, the elders of the village settle the question at once, pending an appeal to the courts. But in the town of Masulipatam, a Mādigā is specially licensed by the Municipality for the purpose, and all disputes are avoided.

Cocanada. At Cocanada there is only one Grāma-Devatā, Nukalamma (from Nuku, a Tamil word, meaning "to beat"); but she is very ill-tempered, they told me, and gives much trouble. Curiously enough, the present pūjārī is a woman of the fisherman caste. The office was hereditary in her family and she is the only surviving member of it. A male relative acts as deputy-pūjārī. Offerings are made to Nukalamma every day, doubtless on account of her temper. One custom I found observed here, which is not uncommon in these parts. When a victim's head has been cut off, it is put before the shrine and water poured on it. The offerer then waits to see whether the mouth opens. If it does, it is a sign that the sacrifice is accepted.² Another ceremony observed here is significant and, doubtless, a relic of the primitive idea

¹ Sanskrit for "presentation of the offering."

² See p. 55 n. 1, above.

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782 of sacrifice. As soon as the victim is killed, the offerer dips his finger in the blood and puts it on his own forehead.

• 776 The annual festival of this goddess¹ lasts for a whole month, ending on the New Year's day of the Telugu calendar. During this festival the procession of pots is observed with special ceremony. Six brass pots, each about two feet high, with the figure of a cobra springing from below the neck and rising over the mouth of the pot, are draped with women's cloths and carried round the town on men's head. Nothing is put inside them, but, as they go round, the women of each house come out, pour water on the feet of the bearers, and make offerings of rice and fruit. These are solemnly presented to the pots by the bearers, and some powder is applied to the two small feet that project at the base of each pot, and form a sort of frame fitting on the bearer's head. The bearer then takes a little of the turmeric powder, that is already on the foot of the pot, and puts it into the dish in which the offering was brought, with a few margosa leaves from a bundle that he carries with him. The dish is returned to the woman who offered the gifts, which become the property of the pūjārī. The women and children of the family mark their foreheads with the turmeric, and put the margosa leaves in their hair. This is called *Ammavari-Prasādam*.¹ As they go round, the pūjārīs dance to the sound of tom-toms.

776 On the last day of the festival, when a buffalo is
796 sacrificed, a curious ceremony takes place which is
241 said to be very common in the villages of this district. After the head is cut off by the vetty,² who is a Mādigā, the blood is collected in a basin and nine kinds of grain and *gram*³ are put into it. The basin is then put before the idol inside the shrine, and the

¹ The turmeric and the margosa leaves are a gift of grace (Sanskrit *prasāda*, grace) from the goddess. Food and water from the table of a Hindu god given to the worshippers in the temple are called *prasāda*.

² See above p. 56.

³ *Gram* is coarse lentils.

⁴ [i.e. Nukalamma, at Cocanada -- Analyst]

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doors of the shrine are kept shut for three days. On the fourth day the doors are opened, the coagulated mass of blood, grain, and gram is carefully washed, and the grain and gram are separated on the ground behind the shrine, in order to see which of the various kinds of grain has sprouted. All the ryots eagerly assemble to watch the result, and whichever is found to have sprouted, is regarded as marked out by the goddess as the right kind of grain to sow that year. This method of determining which crop to sow is common in both the Godavari and Masulipatam districts. In these sacrifices to Nukalamma, too, the application of the blood is specially noticeable. As soon as the victim is killed, a small quantity of the blood is smeared on the sides of the door-posts of the shrine; the deputy-pūjārī dips his finger in the blood and applies it to his forehead; then all the other people present do the same; and afterwards some boiled rice and some turmeric powder are mixed with the blood, and a little of the mixture is sprinkled on the head of the Mādigā who holds the basin to catch the blood. 776 796 241

When an epidemic of cholera breaks out, another goddess, called Maridiamma, is installed in the place of the Nukalamma. A log of margosa wood, about three feet high and six inches in diameter, is cut and roughly carved at the top into the shape of a head, and then fixed in the ground with a pandal of leaves and cloths over it. Then the procession of the earthen pot half filled with buttermilk and rice is conducted, very much in the same way as at Masulipatam,¹ every day till the epidemic subsides. After that, some ten or twelve small carts are made, about six feet square, with three pointed stakes standing up on each side, on which live animals are impaled, as in other parts of the Telugu country.² The carts are partly filled with boiled rice and curry stuff prepared at the shrine, the blood of the victims sacrificed being poured over the rice. I was told that live animals were only impaled if a cart did 755 776 782

¹ See p. 62 above.² See p. 58 above.

- 755 not move properly as it was dragged to the boundary,
 ● 776 since that is regarded as a sign that the goddess is angry
 782 and needs to be appeased.

796 *Ellore.* The number of victims slaughtered at some
 776 of these festivals is enormous. At Ellore, which is a
 776 town of considerable size and importance, I was told
 782 that at the annual festival of Mahālakshmi about a
 a thousand animals are killed in one day, rich people
 sending as many as twenty or thirty. The blood then
 flows down into the fields behind the place of sacrifice
 in a regular flood, and carts full of sand are brought to
 cover up what remains on the spot. The heads are
 piled up in a heap about fifteen feet high in front of the
 shrine, and a large earthen basin about one-and-a-half
 feet in diameter is then filled with gingelly oil and put on
 the top of the heap, a thick cotton wick being placed in
 the basin and lighted. The animals are all worshipped
 with the usual *namaskāram*, i.e. folded hands raised to
 the forehead, before they are killed. This slaughter of
 victims goes on all day.

At midnight about twenty or twenty-five buffaloes
 are sacrificed. Their heads are cut off by a Mādigā
 pūjārī and with their carcasses are thrown upon large
 heaps of rice which have been presented to the goddess,
 till the rice is soaked with blood.

The subsequent ceremonies illustrate again the
 varieties of local custom. The rice is collected in about
 ten or fifteen large baskets, and, instead of being carried
 by a Mādigā, is carried on a large cart drawn by buffaloes
 or bullocks, with the Mādigā pūjārī seated on it. As
 the cart moves along, Mādigās sprinkle the rice on the
 streets and on the walls of the houses shouting "Poli!
 Poli!" ("Food! Food!"). A large body of men of
 different castes, Śūdras, Kommas, and Outcastes, go with
 the procession: but only the Mādigās and Mālās (the two
 sections of the Outcastes) shout "Poli," the rest follow-
 ing in silence. They have only two or three torches to
 show them the way, and no tom-toms nor music.
 Apparently the idea is that, if they make a noise or
 display a blaze of light, they will attract the evil spirits,

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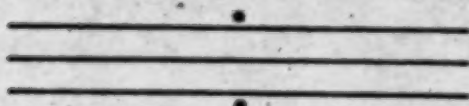
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who will swoop down on them and do them some injury; though in other villages it is supposed that a great deal of noise and flourishing of sticks will keep the evil spirits at bay. Before this procession starts, the heads of the buffaloes are placed in front of the shrine, with the right foreleg in the mouth, the fat from the entrails smeared about half an inch thick over the whole face, and a large earthen lamp on the top of each head. The Pambalas¹ play tom-toms and chant a long story about Gaṅgama till daybreak. About eight a.m. they put the buffalo heads with the lighted lamps upon them into separate baskets; and these are carried in procession through the town to the sound of tom-toms. All castes follow, shouting and singing. In former times, I was told, there was a good deal of fighting and disturbance during this procession, but now the police maintain order. When the procession arrives at the municipal limits, the heads are thrown over the boundary, and left there. The people then all bathe in the canal and return home.

On the last day of the festival, which, I may remark, lasts for about three months, a small cart is made of margosa wood and a stake is fixed at each of the four corners. A pig and a fowl are tied to each stake, while a fruit, called *dubakaya*, is impaled on it instead of the animal. A yellow cloth, sprinkled with the blood of the buffaloes, is tied round the sides of the cart, and some margosa leaves are tied round the cloth. A Pambala sits on the cart, to which are fastened two large ropes, each about 200 yards long. Then men of all castes, without distinction, lay hold of the ropes and drag the cart round the town to the sound of tom-toms and music. Finally it is brought outside the municipal limits and left there, the Outcastes taking away the animals and fruits.

Sometimes, I was told, animals are sacrificed to Gaṅgama by the people in Ellore in the courtyards of their own houses. They then clean the wall of

the house outside with cow-dung and make three horizontal lines with kunkuma (a red paste of turmeric and lime), with a dot above and below, and a semi-circle on the right side with a dot in the middle, thus:—



The symbol on the right represents the sun and moon: that on the left is the Śaivite sectarian mark. They sacrifice to these symbols sheep, goats, and fowls. It is curious that, in these private sacrifices at home, they pour water on the sheep and goats to see whether they shiver, as a sign of acceptance,¹ though this is not done in the public sacrifices at Ellore.

Dharmaja-Gudem, near Ellore. At a village called Dharmaja-Gudem, about sixteen miles from Ellore, while the main features of the festivals are the same as those found elsewhere, there are two or three peculiarities, which deserve notice. The ordinary grāma-devatās of the village are Ellāramma, Gaṅgammā, Mutyalammā, and Ravelammā, who are represented by four stone pillars about six feet high, with figures of women carved on them, standing in an open field on the outskirts of the village: but when an epidemic breaks out, Mutyalammā, Gaṅgammā, Aṅkammā and Mahālakshmiāmmā are the deities propitiated, and special images are made of them. Those of the first three are made of clay, but that of Mahālakshmiāmmā is made of turmeric kneaded into a paste. Then, again, it is noticeable that a Brāhman acts as pūjārī of Mahālakshmi, a washerman as pūjārī of Gaṅgammā, and a potter as pūjārī of Aṅkammā. The Brāhman pūjārī presides over the worship for the greater part of the festival, which lasts for about three months, and during that time the people come almost every day and offer flowers, fruits, cocoanuts, camphor and incense, but no animal sacrifices. All this time, too, some nautch-

¹ See p. 55 above.

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All this time¹ too, some nautch—

girls come and dance in a booth erected in front of the image and work themselves up into a state of frenzy, during which they are supposed to be inspired by the deities, and utter oracles to the worshippers. When the epidemic begins to abate, the Brāhman pūjārī closes his part of the proceedings and departs. 796
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Then, on that afternoon and evening, animal sacrifices are offered under the booth. On the first animal killed, which is generally a goat, water is poured from a brass vessel, to see if it shivers.² If it does, it is taken as a good omen that the goddess is propitiated and the disease will disappear. Then other animals are brought and, in accordance with a very common division of functions in the Telugu country, a washerman kills the sheep, goats, and fowls, and a Mādigā the buffaloes. The heads of the sheep and goats, as well as of the buffaloes, have the right forelegs put crosswise in the mouths, the faces smeared with fat from the entrails, and a lighted lamp placed above them. The blood is caught in a basket full of boiled rice, and the rice and blood are sprinkled round the village, while a Mādigā carries on his own head the head of a buffalo exactly as is done elsewhere. Here, too, great care is taken to prevent any person from another village taking away any of the rice and blood, lest the other village should get all the benefit of the sacrifice, and evils of all kinds descend on the unhappy villagers who have offered it. The ceremony of impaling live animals on stakes fixed round a wooden car,³ and dragging them off to the boundary of the village is also practised here. [787]

Bhīmadole, near Ellore. At another village, called 241
Bhīmadole, about twenty miles from Ellore, I came 776
across one of the few instances I have met with of any 782
direct connexion between the harvest and the worship 796
of a village goddess. There is an annual festival held there about harvest time, in November or December, lasting one day, which is always a Tuesday. About half a ton of rice is boiled in the middle of the village, taken

¹ See page 55.² See p. 58.

[see cat 116, p. 68--ANAYST]

776 to the shrine and presented in a heap before the image,
 796 with a lighted lamp on the top of it, made of rice flour
 241 kneaded into a paste, and holding about one pint of oil.¹
 782 Some toddy is poured on the ground to the east of the
 rice by the washerman; incense and camphor are burnt;
 while the people make namaskāram (salutation with
 folded hands raised to the forehead) to the image. As
 many as two hundred sheep and goats are then killed,
 and fowls are brought by the poorer people. In this
 festival, the rice soaked in the blood of the victims is
 not sprinkled on the streets of the village nor over the
 houses, but each ryot gives a handful of it to one of his
 field servants (an Outcaste), who takes and sprinkles it
 over his master's fields. Three handfuls of the crop
 are cut on the same day to inaugurate the harvest. No
 buffaloes are sacrificed during this festival.

755 On the other hand, when an epidemic breaks
 776 out, there is a special festival, in which five or six buffaloes
 782 are sacrificed as well as about three hundred sheep and
 goats. The buffaloes are killed last of all. One special
 buffalo, called *Pedda-Veta*, great sacrifice, is reserved
 to the end, and killed at about ten p.m. Nothing special
 is done with the blood of the other buffaloes nor with that
 of the sheep and goats, but the blood of the *Pedda-Veta*
 is allowed to flow on to some of the rice, as soon as
 the head is severed, and both head and carcass are
 placed upon the rice heap. The head, as usual, has the
 right foreleg put in the mouth, with fat smeared over
 the face and a lighted lamp above it.

At about eleven p.m. the head is carried by a *mālā*, not
 by a *Mādigā* in this village, on his own head three times
 round the boundaries of the village site, and the rice
 soaked in blood is sprinkled by the *Mālās* on the ground,
 as they go, and on any cattle they happen to meet,
 accompanied by the same weird and excited procession
 as elsewhere.

778 The illustration facing this page represents a shrine
 of Poshamma, a goddess worshipped by the *Mālās*. On
 the top of the shrine stands an earthenware lamp.

¹ See p. 39.

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CHAPTER V

MODES OF WORSHIP IN THE CANARESE
COUNTRY

171 THE Canarese are closely allied ethnologically to the Telugus, and we should naturally expect, therefore, to find a close connexion between the ceremonies used by the two peoples in the worship of their village goddesses. A brief account of the ceremonies used in different parts of the Canarese country will show how far this is actually the case.

- 776 *Bellary District.* In the Bellary district Durgamma,¹
796 Sunkalamma, and Uramma are very commonly worshipped. Uramma means simply the village goddess, and is equivalent to the general term grāma-devatā. Her festival is not celebrated annually, but when there is a specially good crop, or when cholera or plague break out. The following account of it was given me by an Asādi of a village near Bellary, and may be taken as describing fairly the general type of such festivals and sacrifices throughout the district.

776 We will suppose that cholera has broken out in the
755 village. The villagers then make vows to offer the
776 sacrifice if the epidemic ceases. The day appointed for the festival is invariably a Tuesday, and on the previous Tuesday a basin-shaped earthen lamp, filled with oil and furnished with a stout cotton wick, is placed in the house of the Reddy (village magistrate) and kept lighted till the festival and all the ceremonies are ended. The carpenter, also, prepares beforehand a wooden image of the goddess and a small cart, while

¹ Durgā is one of the many names of KĀLĪ, the wife of Śiva.

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